

REVIEWS



Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace

Edward N. Luttwak

Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1987,
283 pgs., US \$20.00 cloth

Edward Luttwak sets himself a grand objective: "to uncover the universal logic that conditions all forms of war as well as the adversarial dealings of nations in peacetime." Ultimately, he fails, but in so doing he provides an entertaining, thought-provoking commentary on Western defence policies.

From the study of military history and contemporary military questions, Luttwak has concluded that the realm of strategy, which he defines broadly as "the conduct and consequences of human relations in the context of actual or possible armed conflict," is conditioned by a peculiar logic that is unlike the linear logic we are accustomed to applying in everyday life. Strategy, he writes, "tends to reward paradoxical conduct while confounding straightforwardly logical action."

Luttwak cites numerous examples to support his contention that much of strategy is blatant contradiction, beginning with the overworked Roman dictum, "If you want peace, prepare war." In the logic of strategy, common sense notions of what is best are violated. A bad road ("narrow, circuitous, unpaved") is likely to be a good road in combat, because it is less likely to be guarded by the enemy than the wide, straight, and smooth road. A course of action will tend to induce a reaction that defeats the original purpose. A successful new weapon loses its utility as the enemy devel-

ops countermeasures. A successful advance becomes harder to sustain as the victorious army moves farther from its homeland.

Luttwak takes the reader through the levels of strategy – which he divides into the technical, tactical, operational, theatre, and grand – illustrating at each the workings of the paradoxical logic. The defence of Western Europe is his case study; in particular, he examines the claim that NATO forces could successfully oppose a Soviet offensive in Europe by relying on "high-technology" non-nuclear defenses. While an infantry equipped with anti-tank missiles would be technically and tactically adequate against a tank offensive, Luttwak argues that at the operational level it would be overrun by the Warsaw Pact.

Luttwak also criticizes defence-in-depth (as opposed to forward defence), defensive defence (local militias), and deep-attack alternatives (e.g., NATO's Follow on Forces Attack Strategy) for NATO on the central front because they fail to allow for the reaction they are apt to evoke in the form of a new Soviet strategy. His message is that NATO's reliance on inadequate conventional forces supplemented by the threat of nuclear counter-attack, though flawed, is a lesser evil than reliance on a strong non-nuclear defence.

The reader need not be a strategic specialist to understand *Strategy*, but should be a military history buff to properly enjoy it. Luttwak is most comfortable talking about the details of conventional battle and draws extensively from examples ranging from the ancient Roman domination of Greece to the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War, although World War II seems to be his favourite.

The portentous writing style – to be expected from someone attempting to deliver the authoritative tome on such a weighty subject – is, at times, annoying, particularly when the writer fails to be authori-

tative. Luttwak does not, in the end, convince the reader that he has divined a theory of peace and war, specifying precisely the relationship between variables and from which one can infer and test hypotheses. What Luttwak has really delivered is a testimony to the essential indeterminacy of combat and the persistence of change in human affairs.

Luttwak, Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, is a self-described hawk, and readers may quarrel with some of his assertions. Few would deny, however, that *Strategy* is useful in reminding us of the complexity of military calculations, and highly contingent outcomes of battles. The book is a refreshing antidote to works that concentrate on the technical or tactical merits of a particular weapon or strategy, while ignoring how it will fare at the broader levels of combat. Above all, Luttwak provides a warning against looking for simple, straightforward solutions to strategic problems. – Shannon Selin

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No Boundaries Upstairs: Canada, the United States and the Origins of North American Air Defence, 1945-1958

Joseph T. Jockel

Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987, 166 pgs., \$19.95 cloth

This book can be read on three relatively distinct levels. It can be taken, in the first instance, as a recounting and analysis of the events that led to the creation of the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) in 1958. At this level, Jockel's study makes a valuable contribution to what is admittedly a sparse literature on the genesis of bilateral cooperation in air

defence; indeed, it is fair to say that it will become the authoritative source for the period 1946 to 1958.

At another level, *No Boundaries Upstairs* constitutes a revisionist treatment of what has come to be taken as conventional wisdom regarding NORAD, on both sides of the Canada-US border. It is unusual to find such analytical fireworks embedded in a monograph that is at once both meticulously balanced and studiously non-emotional. Nevertheless, there are at least three orthodox assumptions about North American air-defence arrangements that Jockel sets out to shatter. The first of these is the now standard (at least in this country) view that NORAD in an important sense must date back to 1946, a year in which, or so it is held, a fearful and zealous US began to pressure a rather more Laodicean Canada to join it in the active pursuit of comprehensive air defence of the North American continent. Not true, says Jockel; for while a few over-excited US military planners did entertain visions of a grandiose continental air-defence system in the immediate postwar period, those who really made policy in Washington tended to be as unconcerned with air defence as their counterparts in Ottawa.

The second of the intriguing revisions argued by Jockel concerns the *purpose* of the surveillance and defence networks that had begun to proliferate by the mid-1950s. It is usually maintained that the primary purpose of continental air defence then, as later, was to provide warning for the US strategic deterrent – initially the bombers of Strategic Air Command – to get airborne in the event of a Soviet attack on North America. Whatever could be done to protect the continent's cities from Soviet bombers would only be of marginal importance, for the expectation was that, as Stanley Baldwin had